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ABSTRACT

This document consists of the recommendations of a commission charged to identify and formulate a set of initial recommendations that would provide leadership, guidance, and direction for a specific research agenda in visual arts education. The paper emphasizes that research efforts should be directed at all levels of art education, from preschool through lifelong learning in a variety of contexts both within and beyond schools, from a variety of populations that include different economic, social, racial, cultural, and gender perspectives. Content areas suggested for an art education research agenda are demographics, conceptual issues, curriculum, instruction, instructional settings, program and instructional evaluation, student learning, and teacher education. Methodologies for research in art education should be chosen to suit the questions asked and not the reverse, suggesting that no matter how a visual arts research agenda is framed, the heart of such a research agenda should be teaching and learning processes, content, and values related to those processes, and the contexts in which learning takes place. The 10 recommendations made are: (1) establishment of a research agenda addressing the following issues; (2) demographic; (3) theoretical, philosophical, and historical issues dealing with content and practices of art instruction; (4) curriculum; (5) instruction; (6) contexts; (7) learning; (8) assessment; (9) teacher education; and (10) establishment of an electronic database to support the agenda. (DK)

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ED 370 861

# ART EDUCATION

## CREATING A VISUAL ARTS RESEARCH AGENDA TOWARD THE 21ST CENTURY

THE NATIONAL ART EDUCATION ASSOCIATION RESEARCH COMMISSION

1993

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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# CREATING

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# VISUAL ARTS

# RESEARCH AGENDA

# TOWARD THE

# 21st CENTURY

NAEA COMMISSION ON RESEARCH IN ART EDUCATION
1993

NAEA

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# Introduction

I am pleased to share with you this copy of NAEA's *Creating a Visual Arts Research Agenda Toward the 21st Century*. The notion of a research agenda emanated, in part, from a conference sponsored by the Department of Education and the National Endowment for the Arts, held in Annapolis in 1992. A number of arts education (art, music, drama, and dance) researchers, administrators, and practitioners attended the conference including members of the National Art Education Association.

After the Annapolis conference, I formed the NAEA Research Commission that included our journal editors, research affiliates, as well as members of our Board of Directors, administrators, and practitioners. This commission was charged to identify and formulate a set of initial recommendations that would provide leadership, guidance, and direction for a specific research agenda in visual arts education.

This preliminary report is being circulated widely to the visual arts research community, practitioners, policy makers, administrators, philantrophic organizations and to the media. I hope this report stimulates increased attention and debate about the recommendations, and provides a sense of initial priorities identified by the Association.

Last, I want to extend my special appreciation to Professor Enid Zimmerman who chaired the commission and to the members who contributed to development the report.

James M. Clarke
NAEA President
1991-1993

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# Creating A Visual Arts Research Agenda Toward The 21st Century

Branches of government, the professions, business, and industry now recognize the importance of research and development in education, and are aware of what happens to progress and well-being when support is not made available.

Visual art education today encourages many perspectives. The field of art education focuses upon creativity, perceiving, and responding to visual forms. Education in art develops understanding of the role and importance of the visual arts in culture and history. The field now is emphasizing that study of art builds upon multiple forms of intelligence and expanding ways of knowing the world.

The National Art Education Association is committed to an ongoing research effort aimed at improving instruction in visual art education. Toward this end, a coordinated planning and research strategy involving all levels of membership will be projected that addresses major research needs in the field of art education. NAEA proposes to invite and support participation in research efforts by offering technical assistance and facilitating communications between individuals and groups engaged in visual arts research that address issues relevant to art teaching and student learning in a variety of educational contexts. When feasible, cooperative research efforts for gathering and interpreting data will be encouraged by NAEA. When appropriate, provisions will be made for exchanging and cross-referencing findings from specific NAEA supported research projects. Such a network has potential for international exchanges of information.

It should be emphasized that research efforts being encouraged by NAEA will be directed at all levels of art education, from preschool through lifelong learning, in a variety of contexts both within and beyond schools, from a variety of populations that include different economic, social, racial, cultural, and gender perspectives. Collaborations will be encouraged among a wide range of professionals engaged in arts education who use a variety of research methodologies appropriate for answering questions of relevance to furthering quality visual arts education.

**Need for a Research Agenda**

Art educators have conducted research that has informed art education theory and practice, but this research largely is a record of individual, independent studies that have rarely been replicated; collaborative efforts in related studies and follow-up research have been sparse. It is necessary, therefore, to identify research issues and appropriate methods that might be funded by private, governmental, philanthropic, and arts agencies as well as educational institutions. Such funded research, the focus of which is to promote quality art education, should be dedicated to studying diverse approaches and concerns, including some not often studied such as nonstudio instruction, gender issues, minority populations, relation to business and industry and art learning in nonschool contexts. It is necessary to explore a wide variety of research issues that will facilitate examining, negotiating, and modifying commonly held beliefs in the field of art education. Such a research agenda should foster awareness, describe situations, clarify and define concepts and issues, extend current knowledge, test assumptions, and contribute to understandings about how theoretical, empirical, and naturalistic research is translated into practice in art education.

**Content of a Research Agenda**

The following content areas are suggested for an art education research agenda toward the 21st century with examples of some general questions that might be addressed in each area:

- **Demographics** (baseline data about the visual art teaching force, certification requirements, state and local curricula, resources, facilities, etc.)

  - Who teaches art at the elementary, junior high, and secondary levels?
  - What is the nature of teacher preparation programs at various levels?
  - What differences exist among states, regions, and cities with respect to professional preparation and expectations of and for art teachers?
  - What assessment procedures are used to determine student progress in art?

- **Conceptual Issues** (theoretical, philosophical, and historical issues dealing with content and practice of art instruction, teaching dynamics, social implications, assessment concerns, etc.)

- How have general American educational practices shaped art education programs in the United States?
- What art content is appropriate to be taught? To whom?
- What art objects may best be used as examples in various levels of art curricula?
- What ethical and moral bases might inform the choice of art work included in art curricula?
- How might feminist inquiry and postmodern critical theories influence art teaching practices?
- What impact does a multicultural perspective have on the selection of art examples used for study?

• **Curriculum** (content, instructional goals, aims, and objectives; teaching strategies, resources, alternative approaches, etc.)

- Are there major curriculum sequences that are used in school art programs at various grade levels? If so, what is the nature of these curriculum sequences?
- How is art curriculum theory translated into practice?
- What constitutes a quality art curriculum appropriate for students from diverse backgrounds?
- What art curriculum experiences may affect outcomes of critical and reflective thinking?
- What are different community perceptions of what constitutes a quality art curriculum?

• **Instruction** (problem setting, decision making, instructional support mechanisms, instructional resources, teaching methods, collaborative models, art health hazards, etc.)

- How are the visual arts taught?
- What are consequences of different approaches to teaching the visual arts?
- What are implications of new technology on art instruction?
- How do teachers' beliefs impact on how they teach?
- What art teaching strategies are most effective for teaching preschool to life long learners from different social, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds?

- **Instructional Settings** (social and environmental factors, classroom settings, community environments and other contexts beyond school, museum contexts, educational policies, supervision, administrative support, etc.)

  - How do different educational environments affect art learning?
  - How do various levels of financial support affect art programs?
  - What are the effects of federal, state, and school district policies on art education practices in classrooms?
  - How do educational reform movements affect art education practices?

- **Student Learning** (measurement of attitudes and values, learning strategies, developmental and cognitive learning, impact of art instruction, etc.)

  - How do students learn about art?
  - How do students perceive and respond to art?
  - Are there differences in the ways students develop concepts and skills in making various forms of art?
  - What specific instructional or affective outcomes (e.g. self-esteem, higher order thinking skills, future employment, achievement in other subjects) are achieved by studying art?

- **Program and Instructional Evaluation** (assessment of processes and products, authentic assessment, individualized procedures, standardized testing, etc.)

  - What assessment strategies currently are being used in school art programs?
  - How are various aspects of visual art education best assessed?
  - Are there differences between art programs that include formal assessment practices and those that do not?
  - What assessment strategies are appropriate for diverse art student populations?
  - How can assessment procedures be formulated to meet the needs and expectations of students, teachers, parents, and administrators?
  - What are the effects of using different types of assessment measures?
  - How can critical thinking in art be assessed?

- **Teacher Education** (preservice preparation, in-service education, laboratory and clinical experiences, postbaccalaureate certification, purposes and structure of teacher education programs, etc.)

  - Do teacher education perspectives at different institutions lead to particular pedagogical beliefs and practices in teaching art in classrooms?
  - What is the impact of outside influences such as parents, community, school districts, and national and state agencies on teacher education?
  - What knowledge, skills, and values are essential for art teachers to teach in a variety of educational settings?
  - To what extent are future art teachers prepared to interrelate the arts or integrate art with other subjects?

**Research Methodologies**

Methodologies for research in art education should be chosen that suit the questions that are asked and not the reverse. To establish a research agenda toward the 21st century, content questions of direct concern to the field of art education should be identified and then investigated through appropriate research methodologies.

No matter how a visual arts research agenda toward the 21st century is framed, the heart of such a research agenda should be teaching-learning processes, content and values related to those processes, and the contexts in which learning takes place. Answers to compelling research questions in art education can be found by investigating, recording, analyzing, and interpreting events about **what was** (historical research), **what is observable** (descriptive research including survey, interrelational/qualitative, and cross-sectional research), **what will occur under controlled conditions** (experimental research), **what is possible or proposed** (theoretical research), and **what is meaningful, good, true, or real** (philosophical research).

Descriptive studies are needed at this time that provide base-line information about the demography of visual arts education, including the teaching force, certification requirements, local and statewide curricula, resources, facilities, etc. Historical, qualitative, experimental, speculative, prescriptive, theoretical, and philosophical studies are needed that address topics such as teacher preparation, content and practice of art instruction, teaching dynamics, social issues, and assessment models.

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**Recommendations for a Visual Arts Research Agenda Toward the 21st Century**

The following recommendations were derived from issues and practices related to the need for and content of a visual arts research agenda toward the 21st century.

**Recommendation One:**

***Research Agenda:*** **NAEA will establish a visual arts research agenda toward the 21st century outlining detailed, specific topics of importance that address issues relevant to art education.**

**Recommendation Two:**

***Demographics:*** **A visual arts research agenda toward the 21st century will address demographic issues, including data about the visual arts teaching force, certification, curricula, facilities, resources, and policy.**

**Recommendation Three:**

***Concepts:*** **A visual arts research agenda toward the 21st century will address theoretical, philosophical, and historical issues dealing with content and practices of art instruction including teaching, learning, social implications, and assessment concerns.**

**Recommendation Four:**

***Curriculum:*** **A visual arts research agenda toward the 21st century will address curricular issues, including content; instructional goals, aims, and objectives; teaching strategies, instructional resources.**

**Recommendation Five:**

***Instruction:*** **A visual arts research agenda toward the 21st century will address issues of instruction including problem solving, decision making; curricula, and program support mechanisms; teaching methods, instructional resources, instructional models, art health hazards.**

**Recommendation Six:**

***Contexts:*** **A visual arts research agenda toward the 21st century will address various contexts in which art education occurs, including factors related to social and environmental issues, classroom settings, community environments, educational politics, administrative support, out-of-school contexts such as museums and other community resources.**

**Recommendation Seven:**

***Learning:*** **A visual arts research agenda toward the 21st century will address issues related to student learning that include measurement of attitudes and values, learning strategies, developmental and cognitive learning, the impact of art instruction.**

**Recommendation Eight:**

***Assessment:*** **A visual arts research agenda toward the 21st century will address issues of instructional and program evaluation including assessment of processes and products, individualized procedures and tasks, criteria and benchmarks, authentic assessment, standardized testing.**

**Recommendation Nine:**

***Teacher Education:*** **A visual arts research agenda toward the 21st century will address preservice and in-service education issues including laboratory and clinical experiences, post-baccalaureate education, alternative certification, purposes and structure of teacher education programs.**

**Recommendation Ten:**

***Technology:*** **NAEA will establish an electronic database that supports a carefully constructed visual arts research agenda toward the 21st century, that includes identification of researchers, research issues, and methodologies.**

## Toward the Future

A research agenda for the field of art education will be established and supported by NAEA and funded by a variety of public and private sources. Outcomes of such research will be presented to the field, and programs will be established that employ the highest goals of quality art education for all populations, at all levels, and in all contexts. In developing a new visual arts research agenda toward the 21st century, such a funded research agenda will create and support clusters or networks and improved communications among researchers around relevant themes and issues.

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